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ABSTRACT

Forming friendships is an ongoing, ever-growing, complex experience. Strategies for building relationships with others are the focus of this paper. The experiences of three diverse groups of professionals are followed as they work to develop positive and respectful relationships in the name of collaboration and as they try to understand each other's points of view. Although not directly about friendship, this professional collaboration represents a major commitment in time and energy. The project partners-teachers and administrators from a Head Start center and public school, and a research team from a private university-came together to develop and initiate a transition program from Head Start to kindergarten. A case study approach is used to describe the developing collaboration. The study identifies working strategies that supported progress, as well as the barriers and obstacles that impeded progress. It also analyzes the evolution of the group's fragile cohesiveness and illustrates how the juxtaposition of clashing paradigms and the discovery of individuals' personal and professional needs, goals, and struggles contributed to the uneven and unsteady development of cooperation among the organizations. The findings are then related to the research literature and the lessons learned concerning the building and maintaining of successful educational collaborations. (RJM)

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Learning to Listen, Talk and Trust: Constructing Collaborations

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Learning to Listen, Talk and Trust: Constructing Collaboration

Forming a meaningful and lasting friendship is no easy task. It is an ongoing, ever growing, complex experience that runs the gamut of human emotions. A decision of choice, one makes a strong investment in choosing and maintaining a friend. Building a friendship is time consuming and although the time is often well spent, friendship can challenge one's level of patience and understanding. Often a labor of love, friendship is about commitment and the ability to remain steadfast in trying and exhilarating times. Friendship is about unconditional trust, support and respect; it is about heart and soul.

In essence, the process of building a friendship somewhat parallels how people develop relationships in general. Relationships that generate similar interests and concerns tend to naturally grow stronger. This paper is about building relationships. It follows three diverse groups of professionals as they work to develop positive and respectful relationships in the name of collaboration. It studies their experiences as they try to understand each other's points of view regarding young children, teaching and learning. Although not directly about friendship, this collaboration tugs at the hearts, souls, and belief systems of most of its participants. The amount of time and energy invested suggests a major commitment on everyone's part. However after almost two years together, the group's progress is still slow.

Literature identifies many theories and circumstances that predictably evolve as change and restructuring take place in and among institutions. However, it cannot identify the uniqueness of each organization's culture and the innumerable personal and professional

struggles that impact the diverse groups of individuals participating in these projects.

The partners in this project, teachers and administrators from a New York City Head Start Center and Public School, and a research team from a private university, came together to develop and initiate a Transition Program from Head Start to Kindergarten. A case study approach is used to describe the complex process of developing collaboration. The study identifies working strategies that supported progress as well as barriers and obstacles that impeded progress. In addition, it analyzes the evolution of the group's fragile cohesiveness and illustrates how the juxtaposition of clashing paradigms and the discovery of individuals' personal and professional needs, goals, and struggles contributed to the uneven and unsteady development of cooperation among the organizations. These findings are related to literature in the field. Outcomes are discussed in the contexts of lessons learned concerning the building and maintaining of successful educational collaborations and implementing change in schools. This study is a work in progress.

Theoretical Framework

Change Theory

Research identifies the many complexities of implementing change in schools. Educators have learned that there is no one vantage point from which to study change; change permeates every aspect of a school's structure and being. Research has also taught us that despite the ongoing efforts of educators to better understand, improve and facilitate change, the key to its success is still somwhat illusive (Hargreaves, 1997). Yet, as educators become more informed about this complex process, the road to

success becomes clearer. We have come to learn that implementing change is an inclusive process. It involves the neighborhood and community, the school, the district, and local, state and national government agencies. More importantly, it involves the ongoing interactions among the people who comprise these various entities. Recent theory has focused more on the role of the individual's relationship to change and has tried to uncover and understand the dynamics that support or impede it.

In studying the role of teachers in the change process, change was something that was usually imposed or "done" to them (Sarason, 1996; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1996; Hargreaves, 1997). Most often, teachers were not consulted regarding change, nor was the scope of their professional knowledge and experience called upon to help develop and better understand it. Although teachers were directly responsible for implementing change in their classrooms, they were entirely left out of the loop regarding its purpose and design. Although change may have been mandated, it did not always come about. It is little wonder that the nature of schools has stayed the same for so long (Sarason, 1996).

The conditions of traditional schooling have hampered the progress of change in schools. Deeply impacting teacher growth and development is the problem of teacher isolation (Lortie, 1975; Lieberman and Miller, 1984; Gehrke, 1991; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1996). Although teachers are busily engaged throughout the day, they rarely have opportunities to commune with colleagues or other adults during the school day. They get little or no time to discuss the daily goings on of their day, let alone get the chance to engage in meaningful professional dialogue. Teacher isolation also promotes the notion of privatism (Lortie, 1975; Little,1990) and indirectly supports resistance to innovation or collaboration. Used to working alone,

teachers are content to stay that way. They do not wish to "jeopardize self-esteem and professional standing" (Little, 1990, p.516).

Another area that fuels resistance to change is the problem of teacher overload (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1996). Classrooms have changed dramatically in the last twenty years. The role of teachers has been dramatically expanded. Teachers are responsible for a diverse student population containing mainstreamed special education students, students of varying ethnic backgrounds and unfamiliar cultures, and students from a variety of social classes. In addition to the responsibilities of teaching and learning, teachers must address the numerous social and emotional problems facing their students. Large class sizes exacerbate this problem. Maintaining order and control in such classes is of primary importance to many teachers.

Introducing innovation and change suggests the possible loss of this stability in the classroom. Trying something new might lead to unknown outcomes. Feeling uncomfortable and out of control causes self-doubt, making it natural for teachers to avoid such situations (Pradl, 1993). Compounding this issue is the stress of teacher accountability. Teachers, who must answer to principals and parents, are often judged by how well their students perform on exams and other standardized tests. If teachers have developed a successful system to teach to the test, they will surely want to maintain it. It is easy to see that teachers who are comfortable in their practice are not often willing to change it.

Previous unsuccessful efforts at reform have further encouraged teachers to resist change. As educational trends and fads have come and gone, teachers have often been subjected to countless hours of staff

development in areas that might not directly serve their needs. In reality, the authentic needs of teachers have been ignored.

More recent movements toward reform and restructuring have come to view the role of the teacher differently. Instead of being passive agents of change, teachers are viewed as integral, important, and active players. Teachers' voices must be central to the growth and development of change (Hargreaves, 1996; Spencer, 1996). Schools must develop a professional culture which fosters cooperation, respect, and collegiality among teachers and administrators. Schools must provide time for professional interaction and discourse (Lieberman and Miller, 1984; Little, 1982, 1987; Cooper, 1988; Miller, 1988). Schools must create a community that values lifelong learning. Teachers must model the tenets of continuous learning and inquiry if they expect the same of their students (Sarason, 1990). Classrooms should be exciting places that nourish the hearts and minds of its teachers and students and promote caring relationships among students, teachers and parents (Hargreaves, 1977). In essence, teachers must look beyond developing their knowledge base. They must strive to reinvent teaching (Meier, 1992; Schlechty, 1990). This task cannot be done alone.

Creating one good idea often comes from sharing the ideas of many. The sharing of ideas is central to creating a purpose and vision for change. Change does not come about in a vacuum nor does it grow in isolation. The shared visions and efforts of people working together create meaningful and important change forces (Fullan 1993).

The roles and responsibilities of implementing change continue to grow. The school alone can no longer be successful nor responsible in this endeavor. Connecting with the wider environment is necessary (Fullan,

1993). Developing strong relationships with the local community, entering into partnerships with colleges and universities, and creating ties with related agencies and organizations expand the possibilities of success. The formation of collaborations, coalitions, and networks has supported the growth and development of many successful new, educational visions (Sizer, 1992; Comer, 1993; Lieberman and Grolnick, 1997).

The existence of such collaborations demonstrates the need for people working together across settings. Such relationships are often formed because of common beliefs while others are formed out of necessity. It is important that the latter work towards finding common ground and not work at cross purposes. A climate of trust and respect must be established, and all voices, especially the negative, must be heard. All groups must be prepared to try many paths. Planned change comes about from the top down and the bottom up. It's a messy endeavor that takes time (Fullan, 1993).

The factor of time is one that demands great consideration and attention when planning for and implementing change. There must be built in time for all individuals to become fully engaged in the processes of identifying goals, visions, direction, and responsibility. There must be talking time to explore all ideas and all voices, including the negative and the dissenting (Fullan, 1993; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1996; Little, 1990; Meier, 1992,1995; Hargreaves, 1997; Barth, 1990). However, the time spent planning and exploring the essence of change must not only be preoccupied with issues of management, curriculum, tests and standards. It must also be directed towards creating exciting educational settings that nurture the bonds and emotional relationships that develop between and

among teachers and students (Hargreaves, 1997). Creating a climate for change is hard work.

Methodology

This research is descriptive in nature. A narrative case study has been constructed from the stance of the university team. Data gathering instruments included journals and field logs maintained by the project coordinator and site facilitator for the first year and a half of the project. In addition, observations, notes and discussions from meetings, workshops, and telephone conversations, and minutes from transition meetings, provided additional data sources and means of data triangulation. As themes emerged from the data, the researcher turned to the literature, reflecting cojointly on the data and the readings. The themes that emerged are examined later in this paper.

The Initial Collaboration

In the spring of 1994, *Teaching For Success: A University - Foundation-Head Start Initiative to Improve Head Start Education*, began its journey. A collaboration among The School of Education of a private New York City University, a New York City Foundation, and four Head Start Centers in the New York City area, the project aimed to (1) enhance the ability of center teachers and staff to implement those early childhood teaching practices that research and experience have shown best support young children's cognitive, social, and emotional growth and (2) enhance the educational experience of children in the centers (Ely, Miller, & Rust,

1994). Central to the success of this project was intensive and supportive on-site staff development. Each center was assigned a site facilitator who worked in designated classrooms three days a week as a resident staff developer. The role of the site facilitator was to support growth and change, not to dictate, assess or evaluate teacher performance. Working alongside the classroom teachers with the children, the site facilitator modeled and interacted in ways to encourage teacher growth and development. The teaching teams and site facilitator held weekly, hour-long team meetings to engage in professional dialogue and child study. This "sacred time" enabled the teachers to deeply explore and discuss the many complex classroom issues that arose on a daily basis. Once a month, all teachers, assistant teachers, parents and other staff involved in the program from all four Head Start Centers attended a professional development seminar at the University to explore issues of generic interest as well as those raised by participants in the program.

In addition, regularly scheduled meetings were held with the university team and the executive directors of the Head Start Centers. A project coordinator maintained the program's cohesiveness, acting as a liaison among the four sites, organizing and facilitating integral activities on a daily basis. The coordinator visited all sites regularly, worked directly with the teachers, children and site facilitators, and attended to immediate problems. The project was guided by established markers for teachers and children which were used to evaluate progress. (See Appendix A.) The project did not outline how these markers were to reached. It was the belief of the research team that the teachers, along with assistance from the site facilitators, would map their own directions. The teachers needed to identify and select their own professional goals and

take charge of their practice. *Teaching for Success* was designed to be self-sustaining after four years.

Expanding the Collaboration: The Transition Program

The Transition Program evolved as a natural outgrowth of *Teaching for Success* . During the summer of 1995, two participating Head Start classes were moved from their original sites to another location in the South Bronx. The site facilitator, a New York City Public School teacher on sabbatical, immediately noticed a public school across the street. Upon some investigation she learned this was the feeder elementary school for this Head Start Center. Almost all of the graduating students from this particular Head Start program attended that school. There appeared to be a natural connection for these two institutions to be working in tandem; they shared the same children and families. The university team arranged to meet with the school's principal to nurture a relationship. Discussion to develop a transition program clearly outlined the commitment to child-centered learning and developmentally appropriate practice. The site facilitator, presently at Head Start, would divide her time between the two sites, with a half day set aside for weekly team meetings at the University. The kindergarten teachers were invited to join the university professional development seminars and attend the annual weekend retreat. The kindergarten and Head Start teachers would develop lines of communication and interaction related to teaching and learning. Again, the project did not outline specific ways in which these goals would be accomplished. The research team strongly believed that this was the role of the teachers. The kindergarten teachers also needed to identify their own professional goals and take charge of their practice. The principal

appeared eager to learn about the project. The school had just been listed as a SURR (School Under Registration Review) School and one of the State's strong recommendations was to improve the early childhood program. This opportunity was well timed.

The next round of meetings included Head Start personnel. The Head Start director and the principal knew each other well but had never before entered into collaborations together. Each believed the time was right. Each believed there were rewards to be gained. Each knew their organizations functioned with distinct differences. The Head Start director and the principal met with their individual staffs and both organizations agreed to give it a try.

The New York City Board of Education had recently established early childhood transition initiatives in its 1995-96 budget. The university team arranged to have the coordinator of early childhood education from the Board of Education visit the two sites to determine if this model might be considered for funding. After a series of observations, the coordinator believed the program had promise. Follow-up meetings indicated funding was being considered. It was critical to the Board that the site facilitator was a Board of Education teacher. To further meet Board approval, the plan needed to be - and was - accepted by the school's site-based management team. The program was officially funded at the end of July 1995.

Partners and Paradigms

Head Start

The Head Start Center, located in the South Bronx, is a clean, bright building with generous sized classrooms and ample educational materials. The staff is friendly and accommodating and the building has a relaxed, comfortable atmosphere. Parents are frequently visible, volunteering in classrooms and attending workshops. The Head Start philosophy supports the personal growth of its parents. Many parents who begin as volunteers later become Head Start employees and develop careers within the system. There are full day and half day classes for children. Most classes in this center have approximately18 students, one teacher and two assistant teachers.

The executive director is a soft spoken, perceptive woman who entered the Head Start system as a parent volunteer in1965 and within five years earned her current position. Under her tutelage her center has expanded to five sites and has been the recipient of numerous grants and awards. A model of the ongoing learner, the executive director listened carefully to the tenets of the Teaching for Success program and began to alter her administrative style. She transferred many responsibilities over to her teachers, giving them the responsibility to select instructional materials and manage petty cash. She provided leadership opportunities to her teachers.

Since Fall 1994, the two full day classes which have since been designated transition classes, have been part of the *Teaching for Success* program. The two classes began in two different sites, but after the first year of the program the director decided to put them together in one site.

The program was moved to a center where an addition had been built to expand the center's working capacity. The classes moved into two new rooms, complete with new furniture, an abundance of books and materials, and two computers in each room.

Most of the project's teachers and teacher assistants are relatively new to teaching. One teacher and assistant teacher have been with the program since its inception. The educational director, formerly a teacher in the full day program, and four assistant teachers have been working with the program since Fall 1995. A new teacher was hired in Fall 1996 to fill the position vacated by the educational director's promotion. The teaching teams and the site facilitator, now together for their second year, have well-established relationships and work comfortably and conscientiously to develop theme-based, emergent, child centered curriculum. The classrooms offer many activities and choices which engage children. These teachers have clearly bought into the *Teaching for Success* program and have begun to enact good early childhood practice. Individually, they have bonded as professionals, working long hours together, before or after school. As the *Teaching for Success* program entered its third year, the institutionalization stage, the transition teachers began mentoring the teachers in the center who were not part of the program, sharing their newly honed skills with their peers. In this Center, teachers are admired and treated with respect by the administration, staff and parents.

The Public School

The public school, located in the South Bronx, is a Pre K-5 school housed in two buildings. The kindergarten classes are held across the

street from the main building in the early childhood center, a smaller building that the district acquired as the school became overcrowded. The teachers and kindergartners are physically isolated from their peers and colleagues. Nine classes inhabit that building, with one kindergarten class remaining in the main building. The teacher of this class, the union representative, needs to be in the mainstream of the school.

The principal is an energetic, experienced woman who has headed the school for the past 23 years. She has seen the neighborhood go through many transformations and has tried her best to meet the changing needs of the school and community. The implementation of the Transition Program sent the principal into a state of confusion regarding her educational philosophy and beliefs about teaching and learning. The vision of early childhood education modeled by the university team and Head Start Center conflicted with the paradigm established in her school. Since the State Report suggested she "look to her early childhood program," she looked carefully at this model. She encouraged her teachers to give it a chance.

On the other hand, she was still responsible for fulfilling district and Board of Education mandates and requirements. Juggling the two models splintered her attention, causing a constant reschuffling of goals and priorities. Trusted colleagues close to the principal encouraged her to steer clear of advice from the university team. Such advice caused her to flip-flop on decisions that were made during the course of the project.

One enters the early childhood center through a small playground. The main door opens directly into the lunchroom/all-purpose space, which branches off into two classroom wings. Some of the classrooms have doors which also open onto the playground. The classrooms are generously sized.

yet many have a cluttered and crowded look. Much of the furniture, materials and books are old and worn. Until this year, the teachers shared a computer, which moved from room to room. The rooms appear dirty and dusty and do not have adequate custodial care. The building is neglected; there is an endless wait for repairs. Each class has approximately 25 children. When the program began there were no teacher assistants. There is a teacher leader who oversees the day-to-day workings of the school, staff and children.

Until last year, most of the teaching and learning in the kindergarten was teacher directed in large group instruction. Except for brief center times, there were few choices for children to make during the school day. Classroom lessons and activities frequently centered on prepared ditto sheets. Most teachers strictly adhered to the New York City CIMS Curriculum.

The University Team

The University team consists of three principal investigators, a project coordinator, and four site facilitators, all of whom are actively engaged in the program. All are veterans in early childhood education. Each site facilitator is placed in one of the four Head Start Centers that are part of the overall program. Two of the site facilitators are participating in transition programs.

The entire team meets weekly to share information, review and reflect upon field experiences, and set directions and strategies to keep the program moving forward. This team meeting is a vital part of the program because it keeps all participants regularly informed. Successes can be quickly validated and problems immediately addressed. In addition to

these meetings, communication is ongoing via telephone and site visits. All team members are easily accessible to one another.

Non-transition site facilitators spend three days a week in the Head Start Centers and a half-day at the university. Transition facilitators spend two and a half days in the public school, two days in the Head Start Center, and half a day at the university. (Since this project is designed to become self-sustaining, site facilitator's days on site become reduced each year of the program.)

The project coordinator regularly visits all sites, Head Start Centers and public schools, and facilitates and attends Directors Meetings and Transition Meetings. The project coordinator works to keep the program running smoothly and is in constant communication with the program's numerous partners.

The principal investigators make decisions regarding overall policies for the program within the guidelines of the funding agency. They work interactively with the teams and partners of the project; they also attend Directors and Transition Meetings and visit the sites. The university team facilitates monthly Staff Development Seminars for all the teaching teams as well as an Annual Retreat.

Coming Together

Teaching for Success and the Transition Program were designed to incorporate and promote many modes of communication and interaction among and between the participants and partners. The following section presents vignettes and sequences of activities that took place to get the program underway. These opening activities set the scene for the promise and problems the program would develop.

The Public School Initiation

In Fall 1995, the Transition Program went into effect. The site facilitator began her work in both settings, the Head Start and the public school. Having developed positive relationships and a strong vision of developmentally appropriate practice in Head Start over the past 2 years, she turned her attention to the public school and began her quest to meet and work with the teachers. As one might expect, the teachers were wary of her existence. Since her role was not to be directive, her role seemed unclear to the teachers. She spent a good deal of time observing and trying to "make friends." She immediately noticed the children writing the letters of the alphabet and doing worksheets for a good part of the day.

As the program got under way the principal discussed the site facilitator's role with the assistant principal for early childhood and the teacher leader of the early childhood center, developing lines of communication. She encouraged the site facilitator and the teacher-leader to work closely together. The principal further explained that she and the kindergarten teachers needed to know more about the Head Start program. Their perception thus far was that Head Start children just play without any direction. She arranged a meeting for the following week to discuss the project with her teachers. She invited the site facilitator and project coordinator to attend. This meeting took place in early October. The principal reviewed the transition goals and stressed the need to improve the early childhood program. She encouraged the teachers to learn about current practices. She asked about Head Start.

The site facilitator described a typical day for students and teachers in order to dispel the myth of non-directed play. To demonstrate that the project supported a high level of professionalism on the part of Head Start, copies of the program's child and teacher markers and samples of the COR (Child Observation Record), the instrument being used by the project's outside evaluators, were distributed. This information illustrated the rigorous program goals. The teacher group appeared interested. To help focus on the purposes of the collaboration, the group discussed ways in which this Transition Project might be beneficial to them. The teacher responses and reactions were somewhat surprising.

The teachers expressed their unhappiness with Head Start children. One teacher claimed that children with no preschool experience were easier. Others described how Head Start children do not stay in their seats, do not cooperate, and exhibit a general lack of control. The coordinator explained that early childhood practice encourages children to become active and independent learners who make choices about the activities and centers they wish to learn about and play in. This response was not greeted warmly. One of the more experienced of the kindergarten teachers interjected that this reminded her of how she used to run her classroom. She turned to the principal and questioned, what should the children be doing? We keep changing methods. Another teacher stated that she noticed 5 year olds have a hard time staying in their seats all day. These comments prompted much discussion among the teachers about what should be happening in the classroom. It appeared as if these teachers had never raised these issues before today. The teachers wanted to know, what was right? What should they do? The principal yielded to the coordinator who responded that the questions were good ones that

could be explored together by the group. The principal supported the idea and set aside time for monthly grade meetings to pursue the questions. Plans were made to schedule intervisitation between the teaching teams to foster clearer understanding of each other. The meeting ended with a tone of uncertainty.

Head Start Continuity

As the Transition Program began, the Head Start team entered its second year of *Teaching for Success.* Already deeply engaged in the program, the director called a meeting to explore their commitment to this next step. She explained that developing a relationship with the neighborhood's feeder school can better serve the needs of the children, their families, and the community. She believed it provided a wonderful opportunity to extend the principles of good early childhood practice to public education.

Site Team Intervisitation

By mid-October, the Head Start teachers made their first visit to the public school. They were shocked and horrified by what they saw. They recognized many of their former students with English language skills in a bilingual class. They noticed that children had few chances to speak during class and that they sat at their desks for long periods of time doing worksheets. Children who were once active and happy in Head Start in contrast appeared dull and passive. They were distressed by the conditions in the classroom - the clutter, the dirt, the neglect. They wondered how the teachers worked in those conditions. They were

thrilled to find one teacher sitting on the floor with the children. The Head Start teachers left the early childhood center feeling depressed.

The following week, the kindergarten teachers visited the Head Start classes. They were impressed with the cleanliness of the building, the beautiful furniture, the classroom materials, and the spacious rooms. They were surprised to see children working independently in centers and helping themselves to snack in an orderly fashion. They noticed that the areas in the room were labeled and that children were able to put their things away when they finished an activity. They especially noticed the 3 teachers in each classroom.

Professional Development Seminars

Each month, the university held professional development seminars for the Head Start Center teams and staff. The kindergarten teachers were invited to attend. The principal could not provide coverage for all 8 teachers and agreed to send 2 each month. The teacher-leader, accompanied by a veteran kindergarten teacher, attended the October session. Because each year often begins with new faces, the session was designed to foster a sense of team building and personal connections among the teachers. Activities promoted substantial dialogue among the participants. Returning teachers eagerly prompted and initiated discussion, engaging newcomers to participate. At the end of the session, newcomers expressed their surprise and pleasure in engaging in professional discourse. The public school teachers liked the format and comfort level of the workshop. One commented that these opportunities rarely existed for them.

The Retreat

The *Teaching for Success* Project sponsors a weekend Retreat for purposes of team building, collaboration, planning, and goal setting. Each Head Start Center sends a delegation of administrators, teachers, social services staff, and parents. Invitations were offered to the public school teachers and staff. Two teachers and the principal accepted. They were welcomed by all and participated comfortably.

The activities in the Retreat were designed to model an activity-based early childhood classroom. Centers were set up that fostered valuable learning activities that the teachers could bring back to their classrooms. By selecting areas of interest, participants learned to develop new skills together with their colleagues. There was much time for professional dialogue and fun. This retreat had centers that included dramatic play, bookmaking, puzzle making, cooking, math games, puzzles, video taping, and making play dough. A library room was created as was a listening center. There was a large selection of children's books and adult literature. There were books on tape and music to enjoy. As the retreat was in the country, nature walks were encouraged.

The principal was intrigued by the format and approach to teaching and learning. She was unfamiliar with experiential, activity-based learning and found the weekend informative and exciting. Formal and informal talk was devoted to exploring how these activities might be implemented in the classroom. The Head Start teachers, many already in the second year of the program, displayed much enthusiasm and made various connections to their practice. The public school teachers, equally enthusiastic, had trouble visualizing how to accomplish these activities on

their own. They were encouraged by the principal to try. The site facilitator promised to help.

The Monthly Transition Meeting

The first transition meeting took place the Monday after the retreat. Designed to explore the roles of all partners, the meeting was attended by many. The university team included 2 principal investigators, the project coordinator, and the site facilitator. The school team included the principal, assistant principal, the school staff developer, the teacher-leader, the kindergarten teachers who attended the retreat, and the family worker. The Head Start team included the director, educational director, a teacher, an assistant teacher, and the head of social services. The District's early childhood coordinator also attended.

The university team outlined the program's goals and purposes. The principal and the teachers discussed the value of the retreat and the sense of renewal they felt. They shared positive views about the Head Start Program and acknowledged their misconceptions. The Head Start team talked about creating similar environments in the two settings. The public school teachers bemoaned their lack of teacher assistants and paraprofessionals in their classrooms.

Head Start's director of social services suggested they apply to the Begin Program, which required welfare recipients to log working hours before they receive benefits. Classroom work is an option. She offered her help to the family worker, who made arrangements to meet with her. The site facilitator and project coordinator agreed to provide workshops to acclimate the workers to their classroom roles and responsibilities. Other connections were made regarding the development of parent roles and

fulfilling parent needs. Responsibilities were delegated all around. This first meeting lasted over three hours and accomplished a lot. Everyone left happy and hopeful. This program showed promise.

Developing Talk and Interaction

As the project developed momentum, the previously described settings became forums and contexts for developing talk among and between the partners. The following section describes how discussion and interaction in these contexts revealed areas of consonance, dissonance, and frustration which constructed and obstructed attempts at collaboration.

Kindergarten Grade Meetings

The meetings that took place during the program's first year were tension ridden. The principal arranged these meetings so that the site facilitator and project coordinator could help the teachers enhance their skills as early childhood educators. As stated in the transition design plan, the site facilitator and project coordinator came to these meetings with no preconceived agenda and hoped the teachers would welcome the opportunity to talk about their practice. They believed that through discussion the teachers would identify areas of interest they wished to pursue. The teachers were simply confused by the purposes of these sessions. They were rarely brought together.

To provide a comfortable setting for teacher talk, the coordinator suggested to the principal she and the teacher leader not attend these meetings explaining teachers are not forthright with their evaluators nearby. The principal agreed. The meetings were also moved from the principal's office to the privacy of the early childhood center, but this did

not last long. Coverage issues forced them to be moved around. The Principal also began visiting these meetings and used them to learn about progress or promote progress by mandating decisions without consensus.

Through these meetings, many topics of discussion were covered. Many problems and issues arose that created controversy between the school and university. Because the teachers displayed very few professional interests and would not initially talk about their teaching, grade meetings often became venting sessions. The discourse was frequently negative. On the positive side, talk gradually developed and teacher issues began to be identified and addressed.

The site facilitator and project coordinator tried to find a safe issue to discuss and began with the conditions of the building. They tried to develop a plan with the teachers to improve the building site. The teachers described the attempt as futile and began to describe the isolation factor that existed in the early childhood center. They despaired that there was little or no supervision from across the street; no one from the main building ever visited the early childhood center. The teachers did not get the support they needed from the teacher-leader. The teacher-leader did not get the support he needed from the principal. It was as if they didn't exist. To prove they did exist, the university team attempted to address this issue. Their initial innovative attempt to provide rugs for the classrooms was thwarted by the custodian who complained rugs were extra work.

At other meetings, the teachers complained they felt threatened. They described the university team as negating their practice and philosophical beliefs. They felt insulted, incompetent, and demoralized. They believed the program was designed to change them and force them

to be more like Head Start teachers, when in fact they believed the Head Start teachers should be more like them. They claimed they were unfairly judged in their efforts as teachers, considering they had no teacher assistants or support system.

To encourage discussion at another session, the university team presented current ideas about emergent literacy. The teachers argued that there was no time to develop new strategies because they were bound by the CIMS Curriculum pacing charts. Trying new models would only result in their falling behind and being reprimanded by district personnel. They added that they resented being told to abandon worksheets and develop themes when they lacked the necessary materials and time in which to do it. They felt conspired against by the university team, the early childhood coordinator, and the principal.

The teachers also expressed anger concerning the sudden, inconsistent demands of the principal. At times she encouraged change, and at other times she expressed uncertainty about the strategies encouraged by the university team. Pedagogical issues continued to create great rifts and confusion between the teams as well as the teachers and the principal.

The project coordinator and site facilitator tried to respond to the teachers' comments and complaints. They worked successfully to free the teachers from the pacing charts. They also collaborated with the school in applying for a Goals 2000 Grant which they received. The grant provided teacher planning time to develop and design center materials and money to order books. The university team thought the teachers would be pleased and would feel safer and freer to move forward in their practice. At a later grade meeting the university team learned the teachers wanted

to order phonics kits with prepared themes and lesson plans. They also learned the time set aside for planning had again turned into venting time. Little got accomplished.

Although tension existed between the teachers and the university team at these meetings, some teachers expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to talk. One teacher remarked that she'd been teaching in the school for twenty years and this was the first time anyone ever asked about her needs or opinions. Another confided that until the program began, no one ever cared about the early childhood teachers. Although she openly disagreed with the ideas of the university team and viewed herself as a troublemaker, she conceded it was nice being cared about. She believed the university team had sincere intentions.

Issues that were positively addressed as a result of grade meetings were organizational and managerial. The principal recognized the need for more communication and promised regular visits to the early childhood center by the assistant principal. (Unfortunately, this did not last.) She also overruled the custodian about the rugs and purchased mini-carpet sweepers to insure their maintenance. She saw that the building got more attention.

Although pedagogical issues did not get resolved, dialogue about teaching and learning had begun. The teams understood each other more clearly. By talking, the group began to uncover the complex issues that surrounded them. By listening, the university team began to understand the history that created the existing teacher attitudes. By listening, the teachers began to realize the university team wasn't so bad.

These meetings helped the principal recognize the extreme resistance to any form of change by the teachers and decide not to force the issue.

She asked for volunteers to work with the transition process and hoped others would follow. Two teachers volunteered to work with the university team to enhance the transition process. They worked conscientiously to make gradual, effective changes in their classrooms. Despite occasional peer pressure, they kept with it.

By the second year of the project, five teachers composed the transition team. The room arrangements changed significantly in many kindergarten classrooms and activities gradually became more child-centered and theme-based. Although grade meetings were discontinued, the site facilitator and the transition teachers lunched together on Fridays to talk about their work. Peers were always welcome to attend.

Intervisitation

Intervisitation between the teaching teams did not take place regularly and was usually arranged by the site facilitator. Since one of the transition goals was to share curriculum, intervisitation focused on reviewing curricular activities and sharing children's work. The Head Start teachers enjoyed sharing their work and eagerly presented materials and projects relating to themes, multicultural celebrations, and dramatic play. They displayed big books they had made with the children which emerged from trips and studied themes. Some of the kindergarten teachers shared their work on dinosaurs and dramatic play. Talk focused on issues of management of group activities and designing center activities. They discussed differing theories on bilingual education. Yet the public school teachers often rerouted talk to the Head Start student-teacher ratio. This eventually created a negative focus. The topic frustrated the Head Start teachers and one finally retorted that with Center illness, absence, and the

need for coverage they often worked alone and managed fine. The student-teacher ratio remained a steady bone of contention. Intervisitation highlighted the realities that the teaching teams faced on a daily basis.

Intervisitation helped the public school teachers get to know their future students and supported the process of planning for registration and September placements. The kindergarten transition teachers spent time in the Head Start classrooms observing, interacting, and lunching with the students to help determine classroom-teacher placements. These were relaxed sessions with a high comfort level and positive, informal, small talk between the teachers. It was at these times that attention was fully focused on the children.

Intervisitation between the teams was successful when it was informal, purposeful to the team members, and pedagogy was not an issue.

Professional Development Seminars

The monthly professional development seminars continued to be extremely successful across Head Start teams. The development of continuity and colleagueship grew among the regular attendees. Because workshop themes and activities emerged from teachers' needs, discussions, and suggestions, the content was meaningful to them. Because the public school teachers rotated and changed each month, neither continuity nor colleagueship was developed with the Head Start teachers. Despite attempts by the university team to integrate the public school teachers, they often felt like outsiders. Their level of participation often depended upon their interest in the content and their initiative to get involved in the interactive nature of the workshop. Only one public school teacher, who

was openly critical of the university team, displayed hostility at a seminar. The professional development seminars were not successful in furthering relationships between the Head Start and public school teachers.

The Retreat

The third annual retreat was presented in a style similar to the one previously described. As *Teaching For Success* was entering its institutionalization stage, the Head Start teams were responsible for planning this retreat with the university team. The teachers decided the theme should be literacy. Centers included music, cooking, dramatic play, felt board stories, recyclable arts and crafts, bookmaking, math games and puzzles. Again, there was a library room, listening center and video center. Polaroid cameras were available to capture Kodak moments.

Morale and attendance at the retreat were high. The public school team increased from three to five. The principal and one transition teacher returned with two new kindergarten teachers and the assistant principal. The Head Start teams included many familiar and a few new faces.

Retreat activities were again designed to create constant commingling, interaction, and discourse among participants, but this year something unique, unpredictable, and unforgettable occurred. A main event emerged from the many activities. The dramatic play group created a wedding and decided they needed music. They approached the music center and asked if they would perform and play at the wedding. This started a chain reaction among the other centers. The cooking center agreed to cater the reception. The video center volunteered to photograph the event. The artists at work in the arts and crafts center designed

invitations. The happy couple wrote their vows. Everyone gathered together for the wedding! The concept of emergent curriculum simply saturated the room. The translation of theory to practice magically happened on its own. This experience created strong bonds among the retreaters. At that moment they were one group of teachers who knew they had created something very special. There were no separate groups.

Informal retreat time did not find the public school teachers directly interacting with their Head Start peers, however the principal, assistant principal, and Head Start director spent both formal and informal time together. Whether or not the retreat brought the Head Start and public school teachers closer together as individuals, it did help solidify the program's goals regarding the understanding of good early childhood practice. The returning public school teacher claimed this retreat was much more meaningful to her than last year's.

Transition Meetings

The content of the transition meetings covered a variety of topics over time including improving parent involvement, articulating plans for kindergarten registration, placing students from Head Start to kindergarten, improving coming to school procedures for kindergartners, designing a student profile form for kindergarten teachers, ongoing coordination and collaboration of teaching teams, studying Bilingual/ESL issues, finding reliable and appropriate teacher assistants, and planning site visitations for teachers in other schools. These topics generated combinations of thoughtful, colorful, and conflicting discussions. It also created workable networks and vehicles for making things happen.

The most successful of these regarded actual transition procedures. The committee generated ideas describing what they hoped to accomplish together in establishing kindergarten registration procedures. The task of putting it together was assigned to the public school teacher-leader and the Head Start educational director. Designing this process together made them each more aware of the complexities within each other's institutions and proved they could depend on each other. The process provided guidance and assistance to anxious parents and created a nurturing support system which never existed before. It enabled the parents to feel more comfortable about the well-being of their children. The project required the joint efforts of the teachers and administrators from both organizations. The amount of time and communication involved in creating and implementing this process resulted in the largest and most orderly pre-registration the school had seen in years. Both agencies were extremely proud of this.

Informal sessions of Head Start and public school teachers working together to place the children in kindergarten classes was also highly successful. By pooling their knowledge of the children, they tried to best match teacher-student fit. They paid special attention to the placement of Hispanic and Spanish-speaking children. Although the teams worked only with the full-day transition classes, this process will be expanded to include the half-day classes next year.

Occasionally, transition meetings became the vehicle for immediate problem solving. The Head Start teachers presented complaints from parents regarding their unhappiness with drop off procedures for kindergarten. They preferred the Head Start approach which allowed them to bring their child to the classroom. The principal flatly stated she

was sorry parents felt that way, but that's how it's done. The kindergarten teachers interrupted and added that prompt attendance was a major problem and following up on the idea might be helpful. The Head Start teachers, who knew the building, were aware of the various entrances and suggested that a time be selected when the outside classroom doors would be opened by the teachers to greet the children. The public school teachers caught on to the idea and added that a closing time needed to be established as well. They took over the conversation and described how this might develop small talk with the parents and alert them to the daily ups and downs of the children. This system would now provide separate space for the breakfast children and enable them to eat peacefully. Latecomers would have to use the main entrance. This plan appealed to the teachers because it provided an orderly rather than a chaotic morning for them and the children. The principal had no grounds for disagreement. The transition teachers brought the plan back to their colleagues, who accepted it. On-time arrival improved dramatically as did the ability to promptly begin instructional time. Parents and children were happier too. In this case, the teaching teams listened carefully to each other and were able to quickly and productively problem solve together.

Some issues were not resolved for reasons of breakdowns in communication. The creation of the student profile was stymied because no one had been assigned the role to coordinate the process. Repeated discussion caused the team to take notice of this item's lack of progress and get it moving.

Discussions regarding the cooperation and coordination of teaching teams were problematic. Sessions to bring the teaching teams together to discuss classroom continuity between settings created tension. The teams

were having a hard time finding common ground. The time set aside was not working and the teams had trouble finding time that worked well for both. This agenda item kept reappearing with little progress towards resolution. Meetings that discussed instruction, developmentally appropriately practice, and selection of curricular materials continued to highlight the collaborators' paradigm differences. During one meeting, the Head Start and university teams could not hide their dissatisfaction and disappointment regarding the public school's investment in a major phonics series. The transition teachers who attended the meetings took the brunt of the criticism. The principal insisted she had to support all her teachers, not just a few. These issues were vastly complex and often consumed entire meetings. They were never resolved; they continue to be the focus of discussion.

Transition meetings had the potential to be very effective. Organizational and managerial issues were most easy to resolve. The identification of common problems or problems where other partners had knowledge or expertise promoted supportive dialogue and successful problem solving. The meetings also maintained group communication and kept partners on task. Pedagogical issues were the most difficult to discuss and were most often not resolved. Pedagogical issues created tension and high levels of emotion among team members. At these times, one of the leaders usually stepped forward to help the group refocus. The Head Start director usually reminded everyone that there were different points of view that needed to be respected. The university team leader encouraged people to demonstrate good will. The principal tried to help others understand things were not always as simple as one would want them to be.

Analysis

The data indicates that the collaboration among three diverse organizations was clearly not a simple one. Though the organizations shared a similar vision, they came to this vision from diverse perspectives. These differing perspectives, which can be articulated as clashing paradigms, were most responsible for causing misunderstandings and occasional dissension among and between the partners. To complicate matters, the public school appeared to be unclear of its own vision. This lack of clarity caused confusion within its own structure and spilled over into the larger group. To further complicate matters the collaborations within the collaboration were fragile, creating at times, a weak link. The relationship between the public school and university was uneven. The overall ability of the groups to work together positively and productively depended on the task at hand. Organizational and managerial problems were most easily accomplished. Coming to agreement on issues of pedagogy continued to be an ongoing challenge.

The group's strengths enabled them to accomplish many of the ideas that brought them together. They began to look more carefully at the children and their needs. They began to create classrooms that were more child-centered. The needs and voices of parents were heard and acknowledged. Development of a kindergarten registration system benefited the schools and teachers and supported community parents. Time was used to help develop stronger personal and professional relationships, fostering and modeling the belief that growth is ongoing and people must strive to become lifelong learners. Through hard work and persistence, the group had much to celebrate. The data identifies

conditions and strategies that supported and promoted collaboration and obstacles and barriers that impeded collaboration.

Conditions that Impeded Collaboration

1. Teacher Resistance

The conditions that existed in the public school created many barriers to collaboration. Although the school's site-based management team approved the Transition Program, no teachers were involved in the planning or negotiation process. From the vantage point of the kindergarten teachers, the program was mandated and promoted feelings of resistance (Sarason, 1996; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1996; Hargreaves, 1997).

2. Teacher Isolation

The grade meetings revealed the teachers' sense of isolation and lack of support by the administration. Feelings such as these often prompted the teachers to retreat (Lortie, 1975; Little, 1990). Although they were offered support to help move themselves forward, they did not eagerly reach for it. The teachers did not feel any urgency to engage in new instructional practices because it was obvious to them they would not be taken seriously by the administration. Hargreaves (1996) reminds us that "teachers voice their response to change in the context in which they experience it." (pp. 16-17) The teachers were also deeply stressed about maintaining the curricular pacing charts mandated by the District. Learning new strategies might also have been perceived as an additional burden.

3. Lack of Professional Growth

Another obstacle facing the teachers was their lack of ongoing professional growth. They were not learners themselves. (Sarason, 1990). Most of their teaching was originally confined to whole class instruction and the use of worksheets. Teaching such large classes of children with diverse cultures, abilities, learning styles and needs requires a variety of instructional styles and material (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1996). The teachers were not familiar with current practices. This became apparent as they tried to design and create center materials. The teachers did not know where to begin; they had a distinct lack of knowledge about curriculum.

4. Insecure, Unsteady Vision

The principal did not maintain a steady vision of teaching and learning nor did she have a philosophy of early childhood education. She was unable to fit the collaboration's goals into her overall goals and visions for her school (Sarason, 1996; Fullan, 1993). Although she agreed to become part of the collaboration, she could not have known or predicted the amount of turmoil it created. She was unprepared to deal with divided loyalties among her staff and feared alienating her teachers and colleagues. She wanted to please everyone. Her inconsistent commitment sent mixed messages to the teachers and collaborators. Her lack of supervision and accountability of the early childhood program allowed teachers not to take her seriously.

5. Emotional Angst

Tense and stressful situations often create high levels of emotion within and among individuals. Coping with strong, personal feelings uses a

lot of energy, and the intensity of such feelings often impedes one's abilities to think clearly and make good decisions. (Hargreaves, 1994, 1997; Fullan, 1997). The data illustrates that personal needs often precede professional needs and high emotional levels can impair one's vision.

Many of the public school teachers harbored anger of which they were originally unaware. Their personal reactions to how isolation affected their daily lives as teachers was a shocking surprise to them. Although they were aware of the reality of the situation, they had never taken the time to think about it. This sudden realization directed anger at the principal and the university team. It compounded the resistance factor. The teachers' feelings of stress also caused emotional strain, causing them to further retreat into their own worlds. High levels of negative emotion impede professional performance. (Hargreaves, 1997).

The Head Start teachers found themselves in a similar situation. Their anger at the public school teachers for not sharing their beliefs became personal and caused them to shut down the process of building relationships with them. Their anger and frustration level was so high, it blinded their objectivity and ability to recognize small steps of progress.

6. Punishing the Innocent

Transition meetings were often a place for confrontations. The public school teachers who participated were those who volunteered to join the program. They were the ones who were trying to cooperate. Unfortunately, they often found themselves in uncomfortable situations because of the inconsistencies of the principal and the lack of support of their peers. They were lumped into that same category. Their individual efforts were often ignored and overlooked. They were rarely rewarded for their good work.

Factors That Supported Collaboration

1. A Sense of Shared Purpose

The aspirations that brought the collaborators together kept them together. Despite the collaborators' different stances, they believed in what they were doing and shared the same vision (Barth, 1990; Pechman, et. al. 1993). Little by little they began to accomplish their goals and learned to work together successfully in many domains.

2. Opportunities and Time for Talk

The program was designed to promote interaction and discourse among and between project partners. The director and principal provided their staffs the release time necessary to engage in collegial activities which included team meetings, grade meetings, site visits, transition meetings, retreats, and professional development seminars. The variety of settings provided formal and informal opportunities for partners to engage in professional and personal talk (Lieberman and Miller, 1984; Little, 1982; Miller, 1988).

3. Listening

Time provided for talk implies there should be time provided for listening. The good listening skills of the individuals in the collaboration helped support the group's progress. The public school teachers spent lots of time venting. The university team did their best to try and respond to their complaints. The team worked hard to help improve conditions in the building as well as in the classrooms, have the pacing charts suspended, and support curriculum design and the selection of instructional materials. Even though the teachers later changed their foci, they still acknowledged the team as having sincere intentions. During tension-ridden meetings,

someone was always listening carefully enough to help the team refocus. If ideas got shot down too quickly, someone reminded the group to keep listening. The teams also succeeded in developing complex processes which accommodated each of their diverse organizational structures. This could not have happened without good listening.

4. Supportive Leadership

The leaders in charge supported the goals of the project. Each remained deeply involved in all levels of interaction. They provided coverages so that staff could attend the various activities. They allotted necessary time for individuals to fulfill the goals they were assigned. During times of dissension, one would always take the responsibility of bringing the group back together. Although the public school principal wavered in her own belief system, she never denied the kindergarten teachers the opportunity to participate in the project.

5. Intervisitation

Spending time in each collaborator's home helped participants understand how the other "third" lives. Although the collaborators shared the same vision, these visits helped to clarify how the various belief systems were formed. Visiting the public school helped the partners see and feel the conditions and constraints that faced the students and teachers in the kindergarten. Visiting the Head Start enlightened the partners to the possibilities of early childhood education. Visiting the university supported personal and professional growth and supported the process of becoming ongoing learners. Visiting each other's homes presented both formal and informal opportunities to develop closer personal and professional relationships, thus strengthening the collaboration.

In examining and interpreting the data, there are still two factors that require discussion. One has to do with opportunities for talk; the other concerns dissonant voices.

Although the project was designed to support time for professional discourse, the settings did not always support the kind of talk that needed to take place. The planned settings were designed to help colleagues learn with and from each other. Such interactions promote colleagueship and team building, elements contingent to successful collaboration. Although such time is critically needed, it is sometimes perceived as contrived collegiality (Hargreaves, 1989). What was lacking was the time needed for serious exploration and reflection of imminent problems. There was never enough time devoted to the unresolvable issues of pedagogy and the coordination and continuity of the teaching teams. The assigned times were not sufficient for the teachers and their inability to find mutually convenient time raises critical issues. Could they really not find time or were the issues too difficult and controversial for them to take on? In fact, since these were key issues, weren't they everyone's responsibility? The collaborators needed to commit to the study of these issues. The easy work got done. The messy work required time, patience, and hard work. It's ignoring the hard work that will lead to failure.

Time and purpose can also find their own way. The public school teachers and the site facilitator created their own weekly time during lunch to continue conversations that began the preceding year at the grade meetings. Self-formed, informal contexts often provide important and meaningful vehicles for growth, development, and bonding.

Dissonant voices play an important role in collaborations. They keep them honest and foster productive tension (Fullan, 1993). The collaborators have been thwarted by dissonance and have not worked hard enough to understand it. In this situation, dissonance created anger and other negative emotions which shut down the group's working capacity. The collaborators must begin to walk towards these issues and not away from them.

The title of this paper suggests three main elements worked together to help construct this collaboration. The data does support that learning to listen and talk were key to creating and maintaining this collaboration. However, the element of trust in this group is still in its formative stage. Until the collaborators learn how to build a better sense of understanding and acceptance among themselves, trust will not be part of the structure.

Building and Maintaining Successful Educational Collaborations: Lessons Learned

This research has not produced any new or startling conclusions about building and maintaining successful collaborations. It simply reinforces what we already know through yet another context. As this project continues, these are the lessons to be remembered:

1. Understand that collaboration takes time. The process of diverse groups coming together is complex and messy. It's a bumpy road.
2. Believe that a strong sense of shared purpose can bring people together and keep people together.
3. Find opportunities and time for talk with colleagues. This time can be structured or unstructured. It can be mandated or self-imposed. It simply must be.
4. Learn to listen. Listen to learn.
5. Design and encourage forums where colleagues learn with and from each other.
6. Spend time with your colleagues at work. Learn about what they believe in. Learn about what they have to do.
7. Embrace dissension. Work hard to understand it.
8. Work hard. Making collaborations work is hard work.

Appendix A

Teacher Markers

1. Encourage children's independence.
2. Encourage children to assume social responsibilities.
3. Encourage children's use of their talents and skills
4. Create an increasingly unbiased room.
5. Create an increasingly friendly, respectful, and emotionally safe classroom.
6. Build an increasingly language-rich classroom with a variety of language opportunities for each child.
7. Decrease (but do not do away with) group-oriented teaching and increase appropriate indirect small group-oriented teaching.
8. Examine common labels in use by teachers and counter these labels where appropriate.
9. Be less controlling and more supportive of child-initiated activities.
10. Reach out to work with parents and community in increasingly useful educative ways.
11. Increasingly network with site teams on issues about the education of children and integrate these insights into their practice.
12. Help teachers to select their directions for study and take over their team process.
13. Offer suggestions to better meet the needs of students to administrators and staff, site facilitators and the university team.
14. Increase feelings of professionalism and higher staff morale.
15. Create supportive classroom schedules.
16. Create educationally sound classroom design and use of materials.

Child Markers

1. Acting independently.
2. Assuming social responsibility.
3. Contributing positively to classroom life.
4. Developing language skills.
5. Learning about their world.
6. Taking creative risks.
7. Feeling worthwhile and able.

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